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NOAA AWARDS \$100,000 TO SAVE THE BAY

Save The San Francisco Bay's Community-Based Restoration (CBR) Program has been awarded \$100,000 grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for habitat conservation. The project is funded by the Community-based Restoration Program within the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries). NOAA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

NOAA funds will be used to expand Save San Francisco Bay's already successful program to incorporate two additional wetland restoration project areas in Marin and Alameda counties and to construct additional native plant nurseries to continue propagating native wetland plant species.

"This grant helps to promote direct citizen involvement in restoring and monitoring the San Francisco Bay estuary. It builds awareness, appreciation, knowledge, and an understanding of the Estuary's natural resources," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "NOAA and the Bush Administration are committed to working with regional authorities to improve our understanding of the environment."

Save The Bay's CBR program addresses threats such as habitat loss and non-native species to creeks and wetlands in the San Francisco Bay-Delta ecosystem. The native plant nursery is ideal in combating these threats as it involves the volunteers in all steps of the restoration process, from non-native removal, to seed collection, to plant propagation, and finally out planting. The native plant nursery component of Save The Bay's program provides another tool in restoring Bay habitats that are critical for endangered species and other marine organisms such as oysters.

"Effective restoration is essential to keeping San Francisco Bay healthy and vibrant," said Jason Morris, Education Director, Save The Bay. "This funding will allow us to build on the success of Save The Bay's program and continue connecting people from all walks of life to the Bay through much needed hands-on restoration of wetlands, creeks and wildlife habitat."

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Save the Bay's Community-Based Restoration Program brings together people and communities from all over the Bay Area as volunteers to restore tidal wetland habitat in San Francisco Bay and tributary watersheds. From 2002 to 2003, more than 9,000 student and adult volunteers dedicated over 27,000 hours of restoration work on Bay wetlands removing over 18,000 pounds of non-native plant species, 12,000 pounds of trash and planting over 20,000 native wetland plant species.

The Community-based Restoration Program (CRP), a financial and technical assistance program within the NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation, promotes strong partnerships at the national, regional, and local level, to fund grassroots, community-based activities. The NOAA-funded projects provide strong on-the-ground habitat restoration, offer educational and social benefits for people and their communities, and provide long-term ecological benefits to fishery resources. More information about the CRP can be found at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration>.

Each year, NOAA awards approximately \$900 million in grants to members of the academic, scientific and business communities to assist the agency in fulfilling its mission to study the Earth's natural systems in order to predict environmental change, manage ocean resources, protect life and property, and provide decision makers with reliable scientific information. NOAA goals and programs reflect a commitment to these basic responsibilities of science and service to the nation for the past 33 years.

The Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources.

On the Web:
NOAA - <http://www.noaa.gov>.